United Nations E/C.19/2003/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 March 2003
English
Original: Spanish

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Second session
New York, 12-23 May 2003
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Mandated areas

Information received from Governments

Mexico

I. Introduction

1. This report contains information on Mexican public policy and government programmes and activities. Much of the information is derived from the recent reform of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States in the area of indigenous culture and rights, and the guidelines contained in the National Programme of Action for the Development of Indigenous Peoples 2001-2006. A synthesis of the activities carried out by the Mexican Government is presented, with information on the work done by specialized bodies; as a result, with some exceptions that will be noted, data will not be provided on the regular programmes conducted by the various Federal agencies.

2. The main targets of these activities are the indigenous peoples of Mexico, the sector of society with the highest indicators of poverty and marginalization in our country. This is the largest indigenous population group in the Americas (12,707,000 persons, according to figures from 2000), living predominantly in 801 of the country's 2,433 municipalities. Of these 801 indigenous municipalities, 3 are very slightly marginalized, 12 are slightly marginalized, 79 are somewhat marginalized, 407 highly and 300 very highly marginalized.[1]

II. Health and nutrition

Health and nutrition programme for indigenous peoples

3. This programme was established in the second half of 2001 as a response to the demands of the indigenous population concerning their health care. During 2002 the programme was strengthened in 361 municipalities in 13 federative entities, and

* E/C.19/2003/1.

03-27686 (E) 310303 310303

coverage was extended to 550 municipalities in 18 federative entities to provide care specifically for 203,411 children under age two and 169,717 pregnant women and nursing mothers.

National system for the integral development of the family

Programmes for nutritional support

4. During 2002, the School Breakfast Programme and the Programme for Food Assistance to Families benefited a population of 3,673,980 school children and 450,000 families living in 602 indigenous municipalities (557 in 2001). The total number of families represents an increase of 7 per cent over 2001.

5. Two areas of enormous interest to indigenous peoples were the subject of special programmes: promotion of traditional indigenous medicine and care for patients requiring specialized tertiary care services.

III. Human rights

Access to justice

6. Within the framework of cultural diversity as recognized in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, the Programme for Access to Justice of the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INI) focuses on the promotion, recognition and protection of human and indigenous rights, by encouraging the establishment of conditions for effective access by indigenous peoples, communities and individuals to the national system of justice through two basic strategies: (a) action aimed at providing indigenous peoples with effective access to the national system of justice and (b) support for legislative amendments that promote the recognition of indigenous rights.

7. Funding was granted to 208 indigenous civic associations and non-governmental organizations and cooperation agreements were set up between INI, the National Human Rights Commission, and the High Agrarian Court; legal services were provided to 479 agrarian units; 881 indigenous persons who had been detained were released; and 759 studies on legal anthropology were conducted.

IV. Economic and social development

Programme for the Development of Indigenous Peoples and Communities (Indigenous Fund)

8. The federal expenditure budget for 2002 included the establishment of the Programme for the Development of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, with an allocation of 1 billion pesos (approximately US$ 100 million), to be implemented in the country's indigenous regions. It is administered by the Secretariat for Social Development. The Office of the Representative for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (ORDPI) participates in the programme through promotion, coordination and follow-up of activities by federal and state agencies, in order to help them meet the most pressing needs of indigenous peoples.

Programmes for indigenous rural development

9. In 2002, a reordering of rural development programmes was undertaken, for the purpose of optimizing their operation and the use of public resources, and to give priority to social investment in highly and very highly marginalized indigenous regions, through the Temporary Employment Programme, Programme of Support to Rural Investment Projects, Programme for the Strengthening of Business in the Rural Sector and Capacity-Building Programme for Rural Development.

Support to indigenous agricultural producers

10. Through the Regional Funds project, INI allocated federal resources to support communities, groups and organizations of indigenous farmers for the financing of viable production projects, in order to stimulate local and regional sustainable development through progressive capitalization.

Intersectoral programme for indigenous women

11. Strategic elements were identified for the production, commercialization and organization of the handicrafts made by indigenous women based on variables of gender, culture, profitability and sustainability in the current local, regional, national and international context.

V. Education and culture

Improvements in the quality of education and expansion of indigenous education coverage: bilingual education (initial, pre-school and primary)

12. The total number of students in initial and basic indigenous education during the last school year (2001-2002) amounted to 1,145,157 indigenous children aged 14 and younger, with the participation of 50,356 teachers who served in 18,018 educational centres. In initial indigenous education, during 2002, 50,890 parents were trained, which benefited 49,675 children in 1,822 centres with 2,031 instructors.

13. During the 2001-2002 school year, a total of 288,952 children aged 3, 4, 5 and 6 attended indigenous pre-schools. This represents an increase of 0.9 per cent over the previous year (equivalent to 2,611 students). Indigenous primary education covered 806,530 children, 3.2 per cent more than the previous year, for an increase of 25,070 indigenous children.

National Indigenous Communications Programme

14. The Indigenous Cultural Radio Stations System is found in 15 states of the Republic. It is made up of 20 radio stations operating on the AM band and four experimental low-power stations operated by Maya children on the Yucatán peninsula transmitting over the FM band, reaching 954 municipalities with a potential audience of 21.6 million radio listeners, of whom 5.5 million are indigenous. Broadcasts are in 31 indigenous languages and Spanish.

Promotion of indigenous cultures

15. INI and the Office of Popular Culture were the two federal institutions most active in this area. During the fiscal year they financed over 2,000 cultural projects presented by groups, organizations, civic associations, cooperatives and creators, for activities in the areas of training, outreach, research and cultural support. The Indigenous Languages and Literature Programme supported many community initiatives concerning reading and writing in various languages, meetings with writers, poetry and linguistic planning workshops, and the Diploma in Literature in Contemporary Indigenous Languages.

VI. Environment

Productive Agro-ecology Project

16. The Productive Agro-ecology Project focuses on promoting the preservation of biological diversity, furthering the rational use of natural resources by indigenous communities and groups and improving living conditions.

Sustainable use of natural resources

17. In coordination with INI, a contest was begun for "Successful production projects for the management and preservation of the indigenous natural and cultural heritage", for indigenous people in Chiapas, Hidalgo, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Yucatán and the Federal District who are achieving sustainable management of their natural resources.

18. The strategy of conservation for development includes the following approaches to action, among others: Regional Sustainable Development Programme (PRODERS)[2] and the Temporary Employment Programme (PET),[3] whose aims are to promote the preservation and diversity of ecosystems in land and marine areas by fostering a "culture of conservation".

19. The Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources received 55 requests from the Yaqui, Seri, Cucapa, Tarahumara, Huichole, Cora, Zapoteca, Otomie, Nahua, Popoluca, Chocholteca, Chinanteco, Lacandone, Tzeltale and Maya communities concerning the use and management of natural resources and the prevention and control of water pollution.

VII. Children and youth

Scholarships from the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs to boarding-school children

20. The basic purpose of the programme Operation Indigenous Boarding Schools is to help indigenous children living in extreme poverty receive primary education, by providing them with housing, food, medical care and educational support, to foster their sound physical and mental development. During 2002, services were offered to 60,494 children located in over 1,000 establishments operated by INI.

Academic support for indigenous youth

21. The goal of this INI-funded project is to provide support for the education and training of indigenous youth through scholarships to public universities, the music schools at Oaxaca and Michoacán, and the master's degree programme in Indo-American linguistics.

International sphere

22. The promotion and international recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples is one of the priority objectives of the Mexican Government. The adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, now being negotiated under the auspices of the Commission on Human Rights, will represent a fundamental contribution to the rights of indigenous peoples.

23. With the aim of strengthening relations with international bodies and agencies which specialize in indigenous matters, INI and ORDPI, coordinating with the Secretariat for External Relations and with indigenous organizations, participated from January to December 2002 in various forums, seminars, workshops, conferences, meetings, working tours, and signing of cooperation agreements, including:

- Establishment of the Board of Indigenous Rights within the Mechanism for Dialogue with Civil Society Organizations, on the initiative of the Inter-secretariat Committee for the Fulfilment of Mexico's Human Rights Obligations
- Proposal for restructuring of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

24. During 2002, the head of ORDPI developed a broad agenda of international topics and attended 11 international meetings and conferences of major importance to the subject of indigenous peoples.

Notes

[1] *National Programme for the Development of Indigenous Peoples 2001-2006*, Mexico, p. 32.

[2] Through this programme, in 2002, 239 communities were reached in nine PRODERS regions and 29 protected natural areas were formed, for a total investment of 14,920,859,000,000 pesos (approximately $1,492,085,900). These programmes covered 14,298 people benefited directly and 103,672 indirectly, of whom 15,971 were indigenous.

[3] This programme utilized resources of 34,057,000 pesos, 16,150,000 pesos from the PRODERS budget, 9,138,000 pesos from the budget for protected natural areas and 8,769,000 pesos from programmes of other institutions that were negotiated by the natural protected areas programme.